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ABSTRACT

In 1984-85, a research project was conducted in New York State to develop a summary of existing formal agreements in occupational programs between secondary and postsecondary institutions, and to determine characteristics important to the success of existing agreements. Survey responses were obtained from 45 two-year colleges and 37 secondary schools, and on-site interviews were held at 10 two-year colleges and 7 secondary institutions. Research findings included the following: (1) 60% of the postsecondary respondents and 76% of secondary respondents reported one or more agreements currently in operation; (2) 43.5% of the postsecondary institutions listed division heads/department chairs/associate division deans as responsible for the coordination of agreements; (3) the major purposes of articulation agreements cited by both secondary and postsecondary respondents were to award advanced placement/credit and to facilitate access to college programs; (4) 66.7% of the postsecondary agreements and 45.3% of the secondary agreements had been in operation up to 2 years; (4) problems in planning identified by 31% of the secondary respondents and 47% of the postsecondary respondents included scheduling, transportation, communication, funding, philosophical differences, and compatibility of curricula; (5) reported costs at both levels were indirect costs of time requirements for administrators and faculty; (6) assessment mechanisms were reported in place by 65.2% of the postsecondary respondents and 76.5% of the secondary respondents; and (7) coordination, communication, and commitment were the most frequently identified characteristics of successful agreements. (LAL)

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DATA SUMMARY:
ARTICULATION BETWEEN SECONDARY AND POSTSECONDARY OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Two-Year College Development Center
State University of New York of Albany
in cooperation with
Bureau of Grants Administration
New York State Education Department

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Fall 1985

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DATA SUMMARY SHEET: ARTICULATION BETWEEN SECONDARY AND POSTSECONDARY OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS (VEA 53-85-301-0370)

Fall 1985

The priority for articulation between secondary and postsecondary educational agencies in New York State was established as far back as 1974 by the Board of Regents in their Position Paper #21 entitled, "The Articulation of Secondary and Postsecondary Education." That paper outlined the problems and benefits of articulation agreements. In 1984, the priority for articulation was reaffirmed by the Regents Statewide Plan for Development of Postsecondary Education in New York State, as a strategy for more effective use of limited resources. The New York State Plan for the Administration of Occupational Education under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 (fiscal years 1986-1988) also identifies articulation between secondary and postsecondary agencies as an effective mechanism for sharing resources, strengthened by development of working relationships. In addition, occupational education curriculum development work in secondary technical programs carry strong recommendations for articulation with a postsecondary institution, and are currently piloting uniform curriculum modules in selected technical areas.

During 1984-85 the Two-Year College Development Center, State University of New York at Albany, in cooperation with the Bureau of Grants Administration, New York State Education Department, conducted a research project entitled, Articulation: Assessing the Effectiveness of Selected Agreements Between Secondary and Postsecondary Levels (VEA 53-85-301-0370). The general project objectives were: to develop a current summary of existing formal agreements in occupational programs between secondary and postsecondary institutions in New York State, including components, problems, costs, and benefits; and to determine characteristics important to the success and effectiveness of existing agreements. Two major data collection strategies were used. Forty-five (45) two-year colleges and 37 secondary schools responded to the statewide survey. On-site interviews and consultations were held with 10 two-year colleges and 7 secondary institutions (20% sample), all of which were current partners in one or more agreements.

The project survey materials requested data about formal articulation agreements. This was usually interpreted by the as advanced credit/placement activities supported by formal agreements signed by the agencies involved. Such activities incorporate curriculum integration and considerable faculty involvement to become operational.

Other activities such as joint offering of non-credit courses, local training services for industry, sharing of facilities or personnel, or individual faculty to faculty cooperation were often seen as informal articulation activities. Formal signed agreements were not always required to support some of these activities.

This publication is a summary of the findings of the research project. More detailed results are available in the Final Report entitled "Articulation: Assessing the Effectiveness of Selected Agreements Between Secondary and Postsecondary Levels, September 1985."

Summary of Data

I. Data Source Profile

- Survey response rate - 75%

  - Postsecondary: SUNY Community Colleges (N=26)
    CUNY Community Colleges (N=6)
    Ag & Techs (N=5)
    Independents (N=8)

  - Secondary: BOCES (N=30)
    City high schools/centers (N=7)

- 60% of postsecondary respondents reported one or more agreements currently in operation
- 76% of secondary respondents reported one or more agreements currently in operation
- Total of 73 distinct articulation agreements reported
- Secondary respondents reported 53, postsecondary respondents 36; 16 agreements were mutually reported by partners at both levels
- 17 institutions were interviewed

  - SUNY Community Colleges (N=7)
  - CUNY Community Colleges (N=1)
  - Ag & Techs (N=2)
  - BOCES (N=5)
  - City Schools (N=2)

II. Administration of Agreements

- Staff member responsible for planning--

  Postsecondary: Division heads/department chairs (39.1%)
  Dean/vice president/associate dean of academic affairs/instruction (34.7%)

  Secondary: Director of vocational education/BOCES (35%)

- Staff member responsible for coordination of agreements--

  Postsecondary: Division heads/department chairs/associate division dean (43.5%)
  Individual professors/instructors (26.1%)
  Dean/vice president/associate dean of academic affairs (21.7%)

  Secondary: Director of vocational education/BOCES (35.2%)
  Assistant superintendent (23.6%)

Note: Due to multiple responses percentages may not always total 100%.

III. Description of Agreements

- Primary descriptors:

Postsecondary

- Advanced Placement (61.1%)
- Curricular (47.2%)
- Joint Planning (13.9%)
- Communications/Exchange (13.9%)
- Equipment/Facilities Sharing (13.9%)

Secondary

- Advanced Placement (86.6%)
- Curricular (52.8%)
- Information Exchange (33.9%)
- Joint Planning (18.9%)

- Length of time in operation:

Postsecondary

- Up to two years (66.7%)
- Three to five years (16.7%)
- Five or more years (13.9%)
- No response (2.7%)

Secondary

- Up to two years (45.3%)
- Three to five years (9.4%)
- Five or more years (30.2%)
- No response (15.1%)

IV. Major Goals and Objectives of Agreements

- The major purposes of articulation include:

Postsecondary

*** Award advanced placement/credit
*** Facilitate access to college programs, increase enrollment
** Increase options for BOCES graduates
** Motivate students to build upon experience
* Reduce duplication/repetition of content

Secondary

**** Award advanced placement/credit
*** Facilitate access to college programs/ increase enrollment
** Motivate students to build upon experience
* Reduce duplication/repetition of content

Key: **** = > 50%
*** = 25 - 49%
** = 10 - 24%
* = < 10%

V. Benefits of Agreements

- Major student benefits were identified as:

Postsecondary		Secondary
***	College credit	****
**	Less time for degree requirements	*
*	Advanced standing/ course waiver	***
*	Motivation/incentive	**
*	Exposure to college/faculty; career exploration	*
*	Academic course options for technical students	*
–	Cost saving	*

- Major institutional benefits were identified as:

Postsecondary		Secondary
****	Recruitment/increased enrollment	**
*	Wider publicity/ improved image	**
*	Student incentive/motivation	*
*	Fulfillment of community service obligations/ recognition in community	-
*	Student familiarity with college/careers	*

Key: **** = > 30% of respondents
*** = 20-29%, ** = 10-19%, * = < 10%

VI. Problems and Barriers

- Problems/barriers in planning were identified by 31% of secondary respondents, 47% of postsecondary respondents and included:

  - scheduling meetings and classes
  - distance/transportation involved
  - maintaining communication between participating institutions
  - philosophical differences
  - compatibility of curricula
  - delays in state-level funding

- Problems/barriers during implementation were reported by 33% of postsecondary respondents, 22% of secondary respondents, and included:

  - proper evaluation of previous learning or student competency levels
  - differences in operating calendars
  - scheduling of classes
  - student motivation
  - time demands on faculty
  - retention of students in articulated track
  - completion/cooperation in admissions requirements
  - informing/attracting students
  - orientation of staff and teachers to the alternative
  - transferability of credit

VII. Costs of Articulation

- Reported costs at both levels were indirect costs of time requirements for administrators and faculty

- Neither level found indirect cost items as a major barrier

- Postsecondary educators (43.5%) did find direct costs more of a consideration than secondary administrators (29.4%) for such items as telephone, equipment, publications, mileage and faculty reimbursement

VIII. Assessment of Agreements

- Mechanisms were reported in place by 65.2% of responding postsecondary administrators and 76.5% of responding secondary administrators
- Formal evaluations such as pre/post testing, follow-up studies, retention/attrition data, and teacher/staff review were most frequently reported as assessment strategies
- Most programs were self-rated as moderately to very effective (89.4% postsecondary, 81.8% secondary)
- Evidence supporting self-ratings included:

Postsecondary

- Number and level of students participating
- Number of completers/persistence rate
- Amount of increased enrollments
- Outside evaluator reports
- Teacher feedback
- Student/faculty enthusiasm

Secondary

- Teacher/student feedback/enthusiasm
- Completion rates of requirements
- College feedback
- Extent of program expansion
- Existing continuity
- College admissions/counselor feedback

IX. Characteristics of Successful Agreements

- The most frequently identified characteristics of successful agreements were reported as:

Postsecondary

- Coordination, communication, commitment between agencies—
  administrators (30.4%)
  coordinators (33.3%)
- Clarity of intent—
  coordinators (22.2%)
- Equally beneficial for both institutions—
  administrators (27.1%)

Secondary

- Coordination, communication, commitment between agencies—
  administrators (29.4%)
  coordinators (39.6%)
- Clarity of intent—
  coordinators (24.5%)
- Goal/program compatibility/understanding—
  coordinators (24.5%)
- Faculty to faculty respect/communication/cooperation—
  administrators (29.4%)

Summary of Outcomes

I. Selected Findings and Implications

- Rationale
  - Although both levels acknowledge articulation as a positive public relations activity and a procedure that facilitates efficient use of resources the driving force is student-centered.
  - Articulation serves as an enrollment strategy but is not usually considered as a primary recruitment tool due to ratio of input to actual numbers of students within any one agreement.
- Procedures
  - In the planning phase an estimate of potential benefits and feasibility of cooperative effort should be carefully considered.
  - Candid discussion(s) between potential partners should help lead to an informed decision of whether or not to proceed.
  - Each formal agreement (advanced credit/placement) is developed by involved institutions with specific steps determined by local structures. Generally a coordinator or designated administrator facilitates planning and determining appropriate components of the agreement. Faculty exchanges determine content, compatibility and appropriate credit hours.
  - Traditionally most agreements contain a standard of a set number of credit hours of college instruction (such as 12) that must be successfully completed before the advanced credit is actually awarded.
  - Most written agreements are simple and brief, and include prerequisites/requirements, outcomes once prerequisites are met, and appropriate signatures to validate the agreement. In some instances a time period is specified for review, updating and/or renewal.
- Success Factors
  - Discussions and interchange between both levels of faculty should take place during course content matching and follow-up.
  - Trust and on-going cooperative interaction must evolve if agreements are to be successfully implemented.
  - Mutual self-interest and benefits to involved institutions must be recognized and present.
  - All programs cannot be articulated. When problems arise in the early stages of planning and/or matching content, an alternate strategy or delay until conditions become more favorable is generally recommended.
  - The primary cost factor is staff time, particularly during the initial stages.
  - Support for the agreement by faculty and administrators at both levels is necessary.
  - Additional commitments of time, travel or money from students or their families work against success.
  - Intent of potential agreements must be clearly stated and understood by all involved. Goals must be compatible.
  - The integrity of the curriculum must be maintained for all partners.
  - The most frequently identified indicator of success is the extent to which students in the articulated alternative successfully complete their programs. Usually a follow-up procedure is in place, some more formal than others.

- Major Concerns
  - A time lag between initial contact and productive discussion; a sense of delay.
  - Concern for content compatibility in advanced credit linkages reflected by discussions of:
    differing philosophies between two levels
    the screening process or basis of credit recommendations
    the extent and nature of duplication in courses
  - Melding articulation processes with standard operational procedures.
  - Lack of support or interest by a potential partner's faculty, staff or administrators.
  - Unrealistic expectations of outcomes and/or scope.

II. Recommendations

- Forums should be provided to highlight issues and alternate solutions/mechanisms, and to facilitate interaction and problem-solving.
- Decision-makers and policy makers for both secondary and postsecondary levels need to support articulation in a manner that serves to promote and aid institution-to-institution linkage.
- Several factors are impinging on articulation which need to be recognized and reviewed as part of linkage procedures. The New York State Plan for the Administration of Occupational Education under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Act of 1984, the Regents Statewide Plan for Development of Postsecondary Education, and the curriculum efforts for secondary technical programs affirm the priority for articulation. Decrease in numbers of students and decline in available resources are among the factors that help justify the need for articulation.
- The concept of articulation should be considered as a regional structure that encourages linkages not only among educational agencies, but also with industry and business institutions.

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